

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

FEBRUARY 2009

☀️ Also known as African-American History Month or African Heritage Month

☀️ When did it begin? In 1926 by the historian Carter G. Woodson. In the beginning it was only for one week and it was known as Negro History Week.

☀️ Why in February? Woodson chose February, and its second week in particular, because it marked the birthdays of two Americans who greatly influenced the lives and social condition of African Americans: former President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Frederick Douglass

☀️ When was it expanded to a month? The celebration was expanded to a month in 1976, the nation's bicentennial. President Gerald R. Ford urged Americans to "seize the opportunity to honor the too-often neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history"

☀️ What is the purpose? The main purpose of the celebration of Black History Month is to recognize significant contributions to society made by black people. In that way, the struggles and triumphs of millions of American citizens over the most devastating obstacles — slavery, prejudice, poverty — as well as their contributions to the nation's cultural and political life are honored.

Useful to Know! → Important people in Black History:

✓ **Abraham Lincoln** (1809 – 1865): the President who ratified the Thirteenth Amendment under Article II, section 2 of the United States Constitution, on December 18th, 1865, concerning the freedom of all slaves in any state.

✓ **Rosa Parks** (1913 – 2005): the first African-American woman who denied giving her seat to a white man in a bus in Montgomery, Alabama.

✓ **Martin Luther King, Jr.** (1929 – 1968): the pastor that organized numerous protests-marches, that led inevitably to desegregation, the right for blacks to vote, labor rights for blacks and other basic civil rights (these rights were successfully enacted into the United States law with the Civil Rights Act in 1964 and the Voting Rights Act in 1965). He is well-known for his speech "I have a dream..."

✓ **Condoleezza Rice** (1954 -): the first African-American woman, second African-American (after Powell), and second woman (after Madeleine Albright) to serve as Secretary of State.

✓ **Barack Obama** (1961 -): the first African-American President of the United States.

Freedom is never given; it is won!

(Philip Randolph, prominent 20th-century African-American civil rights leader)